

Remarks

Currently, claims 1-74 remain pending in the present application including independent claims 1, 30, and 48. As shown above, independent claims 1, 30, and 48 have been amended to Applicants also note that new dependent claims 61-74 have been added to the present application. Support for these new claims can be found throughout the present application, and specifically on pg. 23, line 3 – pg. 24, line 28 and pg. 37, line 15 – pg. 38, line 4. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, claims 1-60 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of any of the following U.S. Patents: 6,129,815 to Larson, et al.; 5,674,590 to Anderson, et al.; 6,248,212 to Anderson, et al.; and 5,885,418 to Anderson, et al. Additionally, the Office Action rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), or in the alternative under § 103(a), in view of international publication no. 99/34060. However, Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references teach, or even suggest, all of the limitations required by independent claims 1, 30, and 48.

For example, none of the cited references teach, or even suggest, the specific combination that the second bonding material is applied to a greater amount of surface area than the first bonding material, and the first bonding material has greater penetration than the second bonding material. Thus, the bonding material applied to a side to cover a greater surface area penetrates less of the web. As taught by the present application, through this process, a paper product is formed having enhanced overall properties. Of particular advantage, tissue webs are produced that not only possess great softness and strength characteristics, but can be remarkably splittable, allowing the web to be pulled apart into two substantially continuous webs or portions.

Referring to Larson, et al., a multi-layered wiping product that formed from a process using a multi-layered paper web, printing a bonding agent on both of its outer surfaces, pressing the web so it adheres tightly to a creping surface and lightly to a presser roll, and then creping one of its surfaces is provided. The first

bonding material is applied through a pattern metal rotogravure roll to apply an engraved pattern of bonding material to one surface of the web. Then, a second bonding material is applied to the web in a pattern arrangement, which is not necessarily in the same pattern of the bonding material applied to the first side. However, Larson, et al. fails to disclose the specific combination that a bonding material applied in a greater amount of surface area to one side does not penetrate into the tissue web as much as the bonding material applied to the other side.

Likewise, Anderson, et al. '212 is directed to a web that can have a bonding material applied to both sides of the web. Although Anderson, et al. '212 discloses that the first bonding material applied to the first side and the second bonding applied to the second side may or may not have the same pattern, there is no teaching that the pattern having the greater amount of surface area has less penetration into the web.

For the purposes of this response, Anderson, et al. '590 and '418 are considered cumulative references since their specifications are substantially the same (Anderson, et al. '418 is a divisional application of Anderson, et al. '590). Both of these patents disclose a web structure having a first and second bonding material applied to the sides of the web in patterns that may or may not be the same. However, as with Larson, et al. and Anderson, et al. '212, these references do not teach nor suggest the specific combination that the bonding material applied to a greater amount of surface area penetrates less into the web. In any event, these two references teach that some z-oriented long fibers extend between the outer regions and serve as structural reinforcers reinforcing the web structure. In other words, the fibers are more uniformly distributed as well as oriented across the thickness of the web structure so as to reduce the lamination of the web structure. Col. 8, lines 15-17 and 58-60. As such, these z-direction fibers actually strengthen the web structure and would be adverse to a tissue web that is splittable. In contrast, independent claim 1 requires that the tissue web is splittable into a first portion and a second portion by a mean

splitting force of less than about 30 gf and a peak splitting force of less than about 40 gf.


Finally, WO '060 is directed to a web having a binder composition applied to a first side of a web in a pattern occupying from about 20% to about 50% of the surface area of the sheet. A second binder composition can be applied to the opposite side of the sheet in a second pre-selected pattern which may or may not be the same as the first pre-selected pattern. However, like the other cited references, WO '060 fails to reach or even suggest the specific combination that the second bonding material is applied to a greater surface area than the first bonding material, while the first bonding material has greater penetration than the second bonding material.

Thus, all of the cited references, fail to disclose or suggest all of the limitations of independent claims 1, 30, and 48. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims are patentable over the cited references.

Applicants submit that the present application is in complete condition for allowance. Should Examiner Fortuna have any questions or issues with respect to this application, however, he is invited to and encouraged to telephone the undersigned at his or her convenience.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date


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